DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 074 SP 040 681

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TITLE Professional Development for Teachers of Reading.
INSTITUTION North Central Regional Educational Lab., Oak Brook, IL.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 2001-11-00
NOTE 68p.
CONTRACT ED-01-CO-0011
AVAILABLE FROM North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1900 Spring Road, Suite 300, Oak Brook, IL 60523-1480. Tel: 800-356-2735 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.ncrel.org.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Administrator Role; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Inquiry; Inservice Teacher Education; Mentors; Program Evaluation; Reading Achievement; *Reading Teachers; Teacher Certification; Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

This paper examines several topics as they relate to the education of practicing reading teachers, including: the state of reading achievement in the United States; teacher thinking and professional development; the history of professional development for teachers of reading; professional development policies and guidelines recommended by various organizations; two basic theoretical approaches to professional development (teacher training and reflective practice); descriptions of various professional development programs (best practices programs, university based programs, coaching and mentoring, action research, inquiry support groups, and National Board certification); evaluation of professional development; the role of administration in professional development; and recommendations based on the literature. Three appendixes include guidelines for professional development, teacher licensure renewal in the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory region, and an action plan chart for action research development. (Contains 107 references.) (SM)

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Professional Development for Teachers of Reading

November 2001

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Introduction

In recent years, local and national leaders have declared reading a priority. They are pouring billions of dollars into efforts to improve literacy achievement in young people. In response to this funding, scores of programs, plans, and policies intended to improve reading, teaching, and learning are surfacing. Some are based on sound research and best practices; others focus on ideology, taken-for-granted truths, and common-sense beliefs about learning to read. It falls to those genuinely concerned with how best to meet the needs of children to sort through the myth and the fantasy, the concrete and the practical, so that they may better inform reading instruction in today's and tomorrow's classrooms. This paper will address the professional development of educators in the area of reading and make recommendations based on the findings.

In a recent report, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) identified several obstacles that keep America's students from achieving at their full potential. Two of these obstacles relate directly to the professional development of practicing teachers: (1) "unenforced standards for teachers" and (2) "lack of professional development and rewards for knowledge and skill" (pp. 10-11). The commission refers to a study of more than 1,000 school districts and concludes that "every additional dollar spent on more highly qualified teachers netted greater improvements in student achievement than did any other use of school resources" (pp. 6-7). In an area as crucial as reading instruction, this point is especially important. Bembry, Jordan, Gomez, Anderson, and Mendro (1998) found in their study that reading achievement is influenced most by the quality of the reading instruction that children receive—regardless of the curriculum, program, or materials that are used. With these thoughts in mind, the ways in which practicing reading teachers receive continuing education becomes a significant topic for scrutiny and discussion.

Overview

This paper will address the following topics as they relate to the education of practicing reading teachers:

- The state of reading achievement in the United States.
- Teacher thinking and professional development.
- This history of professional development for teachers of reading.
- Professional development policies and guidelines recommended by various organizations.
- Two basic theoretical approaches to professional development: training and reflection.
- Descriptions of various professional development programs.
- Evaluation of professional development.
- The role of administration in professional development.
- Recommendations based on the literature.
- Conclusion.

The State of Reading Achievement

The quality of teaching is the greatest determinant of student learning, and America's children deserve excellence in reading instruction. This need is especially important with linguistically and culturally diverse children, who traditionally have received the poorest instruction and lagged behind in reading achievement. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), most age groups have improved in reading achievement in the last 30 years. Nine-year-olds reading at all levels have improved as have thirteen-year-olds, mostly in the upper quartile and to a lesser degree in the middle two quartiles. The least improvement was shown by 17-year-olds, who had higher scores only in the lowest quartile (Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000).

In spite of this improvement, a serious achievement gap still exists in reading between white and minority students. There is evidence that this gap is narrowing at some ages and with some ethnic groups. The differences between white and black students decreased overall from 1971 to 1999 but increased slightly since 1988 for 13- and 17-year-olds. The research is not as heartening for all students, as only 17-year-olds showed a narrowing of the gap between white and Hispanic students (Campbell et al., 2000). More students also are staying in school longer, but the graduation rate for black and Hispanic students continues to lag behind that of white students (Kaufman, Kwon, Klein, & Chapman, 2000).

Even accounting for improvements in reading scores and graduation rates, those students who remain in school and score satisfactorily on standardized tests may still be in need of additional or a different kind of reading instruction. NAEP's analyses of student reading achievement conclude that students are generally proficient in literal understandings, but no state scored at proficient or better in critical reading (Thompson, 1998). With a wave of new literacy tools related to technology—including media, hypertext, and the Internet—the need for effective reading instruction becomes even more compelling.

Finally, all signs point to an upcoming teacher shortage as Baby Boomers retire. This trend already has become apparent in several high-need subjects and areas, such as special education and urban locations. No matter how prepared these teachers are when they enter their classrooms, professional development of teachers in the area of reading instruction will continue to be an important concern for educators and policymakers.

Teacher Thinking and Professional Development

A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (1998) investigated the participation of teachers in professional development. In this study, 91 percent of the teachers surveyed reported attending inservice activities, and 71 percent indicated they had participated in "long-term or ongoing comprehensive professional development" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The teachers' perceptions of these activities were generally positive. Seventy percent of the teachers who reported attending activities related to the main subject of their teaching believed that what they learned had improved their teaching either moderately or somewhat (Lewis et al., 1999).

More than 2,300 teachers responded to a survey distributed by the National Education Association (NEA) to ascertain teachers' opinions about the value of various sources for learning about teaching. The sources were divided into three groups according to the teachers' evaluations. The teachers felt that "direct experience in the classroom" (Smylie, 1989, p. 545) was their most effective resource, followed by discussion with other teachers, individual study and research, and observations of other teachers. The two sources deemed least useful by these teachers were their undergraduate education courses and inservice training provided by their school districts (Smylie, 1989).

In 1993-94, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) investigated the connections between literacy instructional practices and professional development (see . Exhibit 1). NAEP's findings reveal that teachers who participated in more than 35 hours of staff development in reading instruction were more likely than teachers with 6 or fewer hours of inservice education to ask their students at least once a week to perform tasks requiring them to make meaning out of what they read.

Exhibit 1. Literacy Instructional Practices and Professional Development

	Learning Activities					
Staff Development Hours in Reading	Talk with other students	Write about readings	Group activities	Discuss interpretations	Explain understandings	Workbook exercises
Fewer than 6	71.9	76.9	23.2	60.2	86.5	83.9
6-35	82.5	85.9	34.4	67.9	92.4	71.5
More than 35	92.6	91.2	42	79.2	93.6	60.4

	Learning Activities				
Staff Development Hours in Reading	Multiple-choice tests	Short-answer tests	Paragraph-length writings	Presentations	Reading portfolios
Fewer than 6	66.6	77.8	72.0	51.1	25.2
6-35	59.6	83.3	86.4	67.9	42.7
More than 35	46.4	72.1	87.63	73.5	56.6
Courses/workshops on assessment in last 5 years					
Yes	57	81.8	85.9	71.9	49.9
No	67.7	80.8	75.1	49.2	21.2

(Source: U.S. Department of Education & National Center for Education Statistics, 1994).

These statistics leave many questions unanswered. There is no indication of why teachers participated in professional development activities nor of the type or quality of the professional development they received. Certainly, it is heartening to see that any kind of activity labeled as professional development is positively associated with implementation of current instructional and assessment methods. A closer examination of teachers' views of teaching and of teaching

reading, as well as the different types of professional activities that have been conducted around the country, can provide policymakers and administrators with the information needed to provide teachers with inservice education that will improve students' reading achievement.

Teacher Beliefs About Teaching

At the center of discussion about how best to improve the practice of reading teachers lie fundamental beliefs about teacher knowledge and the relationship between theory and practice. Teachers hold considerable knowledge about teaching and learning. Cohen and Ball (1999) write:

> Teachers' knowledge is nested in particulars, and they interpret and adapt in context, building ideas, habits, and practices as they go. They primarily work alone, with their own students, and their interpretations and decisions are tailored to the specifics of their situations. There is little sense of an accumulation of practical professional knowledge. (p. 11)

Ayers and Schubert (1994) conducted a research study called the *Teacher Lore Project*, which collected information about teacher knowledge from a wide range of sources, including biographies, histories, and artistic portrayals in films. They found that the following themes were important to practicing teachers:

- Holistic, situational problem-solving.
- Enjoyable interaction with students.
- An interest in students' non-school experiences.
- Love and compassion for students.
- A sense that teaching holds great importance.
- A search for students' strengths.
- A desire to continuously revise one's sense of meaning.
- A quest for the worthwhile and just.
- A search for developmentally appropriate teaching.
- Ongoing self-education. (p. 110)

Copeland and his colleagues (1994) targeted the thought processes of experienced teachers about teaching in their study. They compared the analyses of an episode of reading instruction by students just entering a teacher education program with students well into their teacher preparation, experienced teachers known to be effective, and educated individuals completely outside the field of education. They found that:

> As people gain education and experience in teaching, the understanding they express of classrooms they observe is characterized by an increase in a quantity and complexity of linkages among ideas and by a shift in the focus of these linked ides toward issues more central to classroom teaching including content taught and learned, pedagogical processes used and experienced, and basic educational purposes. (Copeland, Birmingham, DeMeulle, D'Emidio-Caston, & Natal, 1994, p. 177)

An in-depth analysis of the pedagogical and content knowledge held by English language arts teachers revealed the following about what knowledge is necessary for effective language arts instruction:

- **Subject-matter knowledge is important.** "What teachers knew about their subjects, particularly what they knew and believed about how knowledge is constructed in a specific discipline, affected how they planned for instruction, how they selected texts and organized curricula, and how they interacted with students in the classroom. (Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 12)

- **Subject matter is not sufficient.** "Teachers need to go beyond their own understanding of the content to understand something about the purposes for teaching English or language arts at particular grade levels, the different underlying philosophies about teaching literature, language, and writing, and students' understandings and potential misunderstandings of that content." (Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 12)

Clearly, what good teachers know and can do involves more than adopting what is deemed effective teaching practice by experts. Rather, high-quality instruction involves a complex cognitive process that includes aspects of the learning environment, the teachers, the learners, and the curriculum.

Teacher Beliefs About Research

The link between educational knowledge derived from research and teaching practice is tenuous. Tom and Valli (1990) explain that the "influence of knowledge on practice is indirect, because the practitioner mediates between these two arenas" (p. 280). Teacher understanding of this link also is problematic. Richardson (1994) describes two studies that reflect a mismatch between teachers' professed theoretical orientation and belief and their teaching practice. He refers to Hoffman and Kugle's 1982 study, which found that the theoretical orientations of teachers did not correlate with their classroom behaviors. He further concludes that "teachers' beliefs about reading do not match their practices" and finds that "nonreading beliefs, such as those related to classroom management, are stronger than reading beliefs and therefore drive classroom practices" (p. 94).

Schön (1983) writes that managers in business believe they learned to do their jobs well—not through the study of theory and research but through the experience that creates generalizations that they learn to apply to specific problems. The same can be said of teachers who rely overwhelmingly on "common sense" rather than on educational research to resolve ambiguous teaching dilemmas, "preferring instead to consult their colleagues or to invent solutions themselves" (Gilliss, 1988, p. 49). This rejection of theory for the practical, of the concrete for the abstract, is an American perspective. This perspective is one that prefers common sense and intuition over theory (McAninch, 1993), even one that ignores external knowledge in favor of that from purely subjective, epistemological sources.

The knowledge about teaching that common-sense thinking contributes to reflection consists primarily of experiences and intuition. Faculty lounges are full of aphorisms about the benefits of

experience and the foolishness of educational theory (not to mention educational theorists). The gap between theory and practice, so often decried by teacher educators and others, is not due to teachers' lack of knowledge but rather to a fundamental disagreement as to what kind of knowledge "counts" in good teaching. Rather than looking to scientific, abstract, or theoretical information to inform their teaching, teachers as a rule depend on exchanging ideas with colleagues and evaluating their own experiences by a "what works for me" standard—a standard based primarily on intuitive feelings about what went on the classroom (Huberman, 1983) and one that takes for granted how "working" is defined.

Two studies describe teachers' views of educational research. Commemyras, DeGroff, Stanulis, and Hankins (1997) conducted a survey of 1,600 literacy professionals, including library/media specialists, teacher educators, administrators, and classroom teachers on a variety of topics, among which were their experience with, and opinions about, reading research. Their findings illuminate some of the reasons for the lack of research-based classroom practice. According to this study, three-fourths of those responding reported that they were at least "somewhat familiar" with research. Of those who claimed to be "very familiar" with such research, 48 percent were teacher educators, 25 percent were administrators, 6 percent were elementary teachers, 5 percent were middle school teachers, and 6 percent were high school teachers.

Among those surveyed, 60 percent of the elementary teachers and 36 percent of administrators and reading specialists reported never reading research (Commemyras et al., 1997). Only 7 percent of teacher educators reported never reading research, but even 87 percent of the reading those professionals did was primarily practitioner journal articles. The authors quote a teacher with 30 years of teaching experience: "I think my teaching success has come from loving children and teaching. Research has nothing to do with this. Experiences that work that I hear from others are what count. I have never found much research worth reading" (p. 9).

A study conducted by Zeuli and Tiezzi (1993) looks at the ways in which teachers read research and how they think about it. The teachers in this study perceived the value of educational research in different ways. First, the researchers found that the teachers were apt to skip those parts of readings related to the actual research and move directly to the application section. One teacher explains, "You know what I usually do is skip the research because I figure they're right anyway. They've done the research. I don't need to know about the research. I go for the steps that I need to know. What are the things that I can take back to the classroom that are going to work for me?" (p. 3). Research was perceived as to "idealistic and inaccessible" because of "tables and jargon and things like that that I can't figure out" (p. 9).

These points of view are confirmed by a study of middle school teachers' classroom research. These teachers felt that traditional educational research had several disadvantages:

- It is too slow. The time between the completion of a research study and its publication decreases its value.

- It is written in "esoteric language they cannot understand." (Brown, 1990, p. 32)

- The settings in which the research is done are too different from that in which the teachers work to be useful.

- Teaching is portrayed as a science rather than as an art. (Brown, 1990)

Although teachers may report that research is important and useful, they tend to adopt it idiosyncratically, viewing research findings as nothing more than a bouquet of flowers from which they can feel free to choose those blossoms that appeal to them for whatever reason. "Teachers want to test the efficacy of the techniques against their own classroom experiences and accept them at their discretion" (Zeuli & Tiezzi, 1993, p. 26).

Reform efforts are proposing methods of reading instruction that require serious paradigm shifts, not the simple addition of new teaching techniques or strategies. The majority of the teachers in this study "want information about what to do next in their teaching" (Zeuli & Tiezzi, 1993, p. 27). They do not realize that these innovations require fundamental changes in beliefs that drive classroom practice, and they will not be convinced by research since they rarely, if ever, read it on their own. Even when they are exposed to research findings, teachers interpret it in ways that perpetuate what "feels right" for them in their classrooms with their students.

Teacher Views of Professional Development

Practitioners' traditional epistemological perspectives, which devalue the theoretical and abstract, combined with practitioners' teaching experiences can create serious challenges for professional developers. Teachers' lack of respect for theory and theoreticians and their tendency to hold theoretical beliefs that conflict with actual practice demand particular types of activities and interventions as part of staff development. In addition, teachers with years of experience often have developed a healthy cynicism about new programs and new "ideas about teaching." They expect that "most policies and programs will fade after a few years, and have learned that mechanical compliance or lip service is sufficient response" (Cohen & Ball, 1999, p. 13).

This attitude brings about what Cohen and Ball (1999) call a "perverse sort of social selection," in that those "policies and innovations that have the greatest appeal are those least likely to produce any substantial changes in teaching and learning" (p. 13). In schools, therefore, "something is always new, and many things that were new last year will soon be forgotten" (p. 13). This fading in and out of various programs and policies creates an atmosphere that promotes a belief that "instructional improvement does not require sustained effort," and as a result of that belief, "school professionals learn to marginalize interventions, treating them like peripheral ornaments rather than opportunities for significant learning and change" (p. 13).

It is essential that staff developers be aware of the beliefs that teachers have and be proficient in teaching techniques and strategies that "involve discussing these teacher-held beliefs and practices, and relating them to the practices and underlying theories that staff developers are discussing" (Richardson, 1994, p. 101). Change is difficult, and it is much easier to continue in a familiar path than to question practices developed over years. Nevertheless, without addressing the deeply held and unarticulated beliefs of reading teachers, instruction cannot be transformed in ways that improve student achievement.

History of Professional Development in Reading Instruction

Since schools were first established in this country, one of their primary responsibilities has been to create literate citizens. However, the role of the teacher, the nature of literacy instruction, and the character of professional development have changed a great deal since those early days.

1800-1950

In the 19th century, teachers usually were poorly educated; they often had little more than an elementary education themselves and were usually considered incapable of advancing their own learning. Teachers during this era were required to attend teacher institutes that consisted of motivational speakers or subject-matter information (Neil, 1986). Reading instruction during this time was largely didactic, consisting of oral reading of texts with morals and lessons.

As teaching became professionalized at the turn of the century and schools appeared for the specific purpose of training teachers, inservice education changed somewhat. From the 1920s to the 1940s, teacher training was aimed at correcting supposed deficiencies in teachers' home culture and personal background. These programs also addressed supposed gaps left by their teacher education programs (Neil, 1986). Views of teaching reading changed during this period as instruction moved from primarily oral to silent reading with an emphasis on comprehension (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1999).

1950s

With the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik in 1957 came the first wave of school reform of the 20th century. "Progressive education" was soundly attacked by policymakers, who demanded a return to academic content, particularly in math and the sciences and also in the area of English education (O'Donnell, 1990). Inservice education for teachers during the '50s usually consisted of workshops "wherein teachers worked together with a resource person and a curriculum director" (Neil, 1986, p. 6). At this time, many children were learning to read through a "whole word method" with basal readers consisting of highly controlled vocabulary, leading some critics to charge that this method was "overly simplistic and limit[ed]...children's reading development" (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1999, p. 3).

1960s

The dawn of the 1960s brought many revolutionary ideas to American society as well as to its classrooms. The federal government became involved in education as a result of Lyndon's Johnson's War on Poverty and began many programs, the goals of which were to provide equal educational opportunity for poor children (McGill-Franzen, 2000). In 1965, as part of the War on Poverty, the Head Start program was initiated to help poor preschool children catch up to their more affluent counterparts in academic achievement by providing experiences to prepare them for school. There is some disagreement about the success of Head Start programs particularly for African-American and Spanish-speaking children—probably because it is difficult to separate the Head Start experience from other significant factors related to poverty, such as the quality of subsequent school experiences (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed in this decade, provided funds to attract young people to the teaching profession, particularly to high-poverty areas. This act also "institutionalized reading teachers into the American educational workforce," and brought reading professionals to schools with children who needed extra help (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1999, p. 7).

The Title I program also was initiated at this time with the specific goal of funding compensatory programs, primarily in reading in high-poverty school districts. Although early evaluations of these programs revealed few, if any, gains in achievement, the program has survived to the present, undergoing many substantive modifications over time (McGill-Franzen, 2000).

Inservice teacher education during the 1960s declined in quality and in quantity, a condition that Connelly and Albaz (1980) attribute to a change in emphasis from classroom practice to "(1) large-scale programming, (2) disregard of teacher evaluation with the emphasis on curriculum planning, (3) ignorance of the teacher's role, and (4) systematic management that glossed over underlying value assumptions" (cited in Neil, 1986, p. 6).

1970s

In the '70s, a new approach to instruction was taking a firm hold in classrooms. Based on the behaviorist principles developed by B. F. Skinner, this instructional approach divided learning into discrete skills and provided extensive practice with immediate feedback. In the world of reading, this teaching method gave birth to prepackaged programs of "individualized instruction." Working in these kits and packages, children moved independently through a series of more and more difficult texts, working on specific skills.

This movement coincided with federal legislation—Public Law 90-142—that had a profound impact on public education in this country. This underfunded legislation required school districts to provide free public education to all students, regardless of disability. A whole new category of reading problems emerged with the expansion of special education; many children were diagnosed with "learning disabilities," most of which were related to reading. These children, however, were not given specific instruction in reading as were beneficiaries of other programs such as Title I but were "assumed to have an organic disability that impaired their ability to read" (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1996).

The Right-to-Read Program, begun in 1974, was a comprehensive initiative aimed at improving literacy instruction in all segments of society, ranging from preschool to adult. It included funding for inservice education, inexpensive book distribution, and a range of programs aimed at improving the reading ability of all Americans (Jackson, 1978).

1980s

The third wave of school reform began with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In addition, reading was the focus of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, &Wilkenson, 1985). Although it later was shown to be based more on ideology than on sound research (see Berliner, Biddle, & Bell, 1996), *A Nation at Risk* continues to affect American education through the political resources that

supported it (Garman, 1995). The '80s brought a range of reform-based studies and initiatives that focused on three specific areas: leadership, quality of instruction, and accountability.

As the 1970s drew to a close, many literacy educators already were rejecting the fragmented, behavioristic approach to reading instruction reflected in individualized kits and programs. Researchers and teachers were beginning to see reading, in particular, as more holistic—an integration of all the language arts with all subject areas. From this point of view, reading instruction was viewed as dynamic, interactive, and even social. This theoretical approach to reading brought about several significant changes in classroom instruction, particularly the use of literature-based reading programs, reading in the content areas, and the writing process. These changes were especially apparent in many early literacy programs; teachers were encouraged to surround young children with print and to encourage them to make their own meaning from this language. This era was the beginning of the "whole language versus phonics" wars, which persist to this day.

During the 1980s, many states also began to pay more attention to the certification of new teachers. Teacher tests were implemented to ensure basic skill levels in literacy as well as in other areas. Tests also were available but not always used to assess future teachers' knowledge in various subject areas, including language arts. Increasingly, teacher licenses became tied to performance on standardized tests, in addition to the courses future teachers took in their teacher preparation programs. Most states at this time had some requirements for renewing certificates. These requirements usually specified gaining a minimum number of credits every few years.

Much of the attention to teaching with the reform movements of the 1980s revolved around Madeline Hunter's curriculum planning model. This model involved a series of steps thought to be necessary for effective teaching. Teachers took a series of workshops teaching them how to "do" these steps. Evaluations of teaching performance were focused on the successful implementation of the model (Goodman, 1995). A tool developed initially only for supervision of teachers, the Hunter Model became omnipresent in school district professional development activities. This model set out a list of components of effective lessons, and teachers were trained to include them systematically in their instruction. They then were evaluated on their effective implementation of these components (Garman, 1995).

At the same time as districts were attempting to mold instruction to the Hunter Model, efforts were underway to begin restructuring the highly hierarchical, traditional school administration into a flatter, more participative type of governance. These movements created what Garman (1995) calls a "schizophrenic" approach to supervision. As he explains, "We spent the first half of the decade training principals to assume more power over the teachers' domain, and during the second half of the decade we ask 'Why can't principals empower teachers?' " (p. 27). Many school- and district-level meetings were devoted to training and discussion of "site-based management" and the shift from "direct administrative control to indirect teacher participation" (p. 32).

Change was on the national horizon as well. In 1989, the state governors organized an education summit, and with bipartisan support from the legislature, they established the National Education Goals, today often referred to as the *Goals 2000*. Three of these goals related to literacy:

- By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn.

- By the year 2000, all students will leave Grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science....

- By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (National Education Goals Panel, 1990)

1990s and the Dawn of the 21st Century

Like the principles discussed in *A Nation at Risk,* the Goals 2000 inspired a range of programs and policies whose purpose was to improve the academic achievement of American students. The accountability mandates of the '80s gained force, and test scores became important factors in all areas—from teacher retention to allocation of funds. During the '90s, public demands for accountability brought about policy actions such as the public takeover of schools, as in the Chicago Public Schools, and increased attention to teacher qualifications and certification. By the end of the 20th century, most states had initiated standards to describe what was competent learner achievement in all subject areas. Many had instituted frequent testing of students. These statewide or nationally normed tests rarely matched the learning standards, which usually described critical thinking and deep understanding of significant subject-area concepts. Nevertheless, a great deal of effort was placed into the development of these standards, and teachers were expected to use them as the foundation for all instruction.

Today, educational reform is supported by a series of well-researched and documented programs and reports to facilitate the enhancement of teacher capacity and expertise in the area of reading and professional development for all of America's children. Some of these outstanding programs and reports are:

- *The America Reads Challenge* (U.S. Department of Education, 1999b), available online at **www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/index.html**

- *The Reading Excellence Program* (U.S. Department of Education, 1999a), available online at **www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA/**

- *No Child Left Behind* (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), available online at **www.ed.gov/inits/nclb/titlepage.html**

- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), available online at **www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/prdyc/**

- *Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader* (U.S. Department of Education, 1999c), available online at **www.ed.gov/pubs/startearly/**

- *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do* (Moats, 1999), available online at **www.aft.org/EdIssues/rocketscience.htm**

- *Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide* (Learning First Alliance, 2000), available online at **www.learningfirst.org/readingguide-all.html**

- *Teaching Children to Read* (National Reading Panel, 2000), available online at **www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/summary.htm**

Professional Development Policies

As a result of the importance of professional development, several national organizations with an interest in student achievement have developed guidelines and standards to direct the education of practicing teachers. The standards of the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) apply to any kind of general professional development while those developed by the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement and the Learning First Alliance deal specifically with inservice education in the area of the language arts. Several trends appear in these standards that speak to a more comprehensive, thoughtful approach to professional development than has existed in the past. (For a complete list of the guidelines for each organization, see Appendix A.)

Goals of Professional Development Programs

As would be expected, an important component in all the guidelines for effective professional development is increased content and pedagogical knowledge. Both NSDC (2001) and USDE (1998) state that inservice education for teachers should broaden and deepen their content knowledge. The Learning First Alliance, an organization specifically formed to improve reading achievement through professional development, lists the specific reading content that teachers should receive from professional development:

- Phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print
- The alphabetic code: phonics and decoding
- Fluent, automatic reading of text
- Vocabulary
- Text comprehension
- Written expression
- Spelling and handwriting
- Screening and continuous assessment to inform instruction
- Motivating children to read and developing their literacy horizons (Learning First Alliance, 2000)

These organizations also direct that effective staff development programs should focus on teacher thinking as it relates to their teaching practice. NSDC (2001) recommends that teachers learn to "apply

research to decision making." Teachers also should develop the skills to "assess their own progress in instructional development activities" (National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, 1998) and participate in "continuous inquiry and improvement in the daily life of schools" (USDE, 1998).

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

The recommendations of these organizations take into account what research has shown about adult learning and organizational change. There is consensus that effective inservice teacher education requires "substantial time and other resources" and is "driven by a coherent long-term plan" (USDE, 1998). Effective staff development considers "knowledge about human learning and change" (NSDC, 2001). It recognizes that teacher learning is a process that "occurs in definable stages" and that it requires ongoing support in the form of follow-up "consultation and classes" (Learning First Alliance, 2000).

In addition to a long-term commitment, effective professional development also requires a commitment to a systemic, collaborative view of organizational learning. For teachers to grow professionally, they must be part of learning communities that engage in "examination of assumptions, exploration of existing practice, and formulation of new possibilities" (National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, 1998). The NSDC and USDE recommend that professional development programs be inclusive and focused on teachers, but open to other individuals as well—particularly administrators, but also others who have an impact on student learning.

The content of professional development activities, according to the Learning First Alliance (2000), must "meet individual needs" through a variety of formats and programs. These activities should be "problem based" and revolve around teachers' authentic experiences. They also should focus on the "goals, materials, curriculum, and students that are part of the teachers' daily professional realities" (National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement , 1998).

Surprisingly, only two of these organizations address the issue of the evaluation of professional development. The USDE (1998) recommends that programs ultimately be evaluated in terms of their effect on student achievement and teacher performance, and the Learning First Alliance (2001) suggests that "significant time must be allowed before the outcomes of a professional development program can be determined."

Gaps in Professional Development Guidelines

In spite of the movement in these organizations toward a more holistic, flexible approach to the professional development of teachers, some issues are notably absent or only rarely mentioned. One missing piece is the use of data to drive professional development. Only the NSDC (2001) includes the use of "disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement." Also missing is a more rigorous description of the kinds of evaluation that are essential to designing effective professional development. Certainly, this issue should be explored more thoroughly by these organizations in the future.

The Future of Professional Development

All these groups see professional development as a lengthy process and one that requires collaboration not only among teachers and other school personnel but also with parents, community members, and other stakeholders. In all cases, the vision of professional development put forth by these organizations is vastly different from the traditional one-time workshops that currently provide the content of inservice education in many school districts (Beach, 1984). All groups recognize the importance of in-depth understanding, follow-up support, and flexibility in professional development plans. Clearly, there is some degree of shared understanding as to how best to educate practicing teachers in ways that improve their instruction and the achievement of their students.

Federal Leadership

President George W. Bush, recognizing the importance of reading for all American children, has allocated more than $5 billion to be made available for reading programs, including professional development for teachers of reading. The use of these funds, however, may create debate and concern. McGill-Franzen (2000) notes, "Top-down reading policy usually does not help teachers learn how to do it—how to get from policy to practice.... Teachers need opportunity to learn from policy. But what they take from these opportunities depends also on what they bring to policy—their own knowledge and beliefs."

The whole-scale implementation of research-based programs to improve reading achievement undoubtedly will give researchers much to look at in the future. These programs may be effective when integrated with strong professional development. Perhaps specific programs are irrelevant, and more effort needs to be expended on how teachers think about what they are doing as they face their students every day. Allington & McGill-Franzen (1999) describe an ideal school for the 21st century: In these schools, "all teachers would be more expert and have more authority to act on that expertise. They would also work in school environments that were well-designed to support this work" (p. 24). High-quality professional development can provide the tools to create contexts in which teachers can better meet the diverse needs of their students.

Approaches to Professional Development

Current research holds great promise for improving the reading achievement of America's students. The path from this research to classroom practice that incorporates this knowledge is not a straight one. Those entrusted with the education of reading teachers must consider carefully their goals as they design and implement staff development in literacy instruction. Inservice education programs are designed typically from either a training or a reflective practice model of staff development.

Teacher Training

One way in which research can influence teachers' practice is through a "training" model. Here the role of research is to discover those teacher behaviors that produce desired outcomes, such as increases in reading scores, and transfer them to preservice and inservice teachers. The term "best practices," ubiquitous in educational circles, reflects this view. This method abounds with common-sense support. As Jackson (1992) describes it:

> Surely, the most obvious way to contribute to teacher development is to tell teachers how to teach or, if they already know how, by telling them how to teach better than they are presently doing.... In any event, help of this kind takes the form of advice that basically says, 'Do this' or 'Don't do that' or 'Do this rather than that.' (p. 64)

This method is often, but not always, accompanied by instructional methods that include "behaviorally defined competencies and objectives, pretests and posttests...and a dominance of prepackaged textual and often worksheet material" (Apple & Jungck, 1992, p. 25).

Reflective Practice

In the educational community, "teachers and administrators have seen rapid growth in the number of preservice and inservice programs that incorporate the concepts of reflective practice—programs which use experience and reflection to develop professional skills" (Osterman, 1990, pp. 133-134). Dewey (1910) described reflection as the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 6). By reflecting, teachers can practice and demonstrate their commitment to the children in their classrooms, a "pedagogical thoughtfulness," according to van Manen (1991, p. 9). They see teaching as a problem-solving activity, through which they are "engag[ed] in a process of seeking and making meaning from personal, practical, and professional experiences" (Vacca, Vacca, & Bruneau, 1997, p. 446). In other words, as Paolo Freire says, "Teachers should be conscious every day that they are coming to school to learn and not just to teach" (cited in Burton, 1991, pp. 16-17).

Whereas a training approach to teacher development perceives educational knowledge as immutable and transferable, a reflective practice approach sees educational knowledge as flexible and contingent on particular circumstances. The foundation for growth occurs when teachers see the contradictions between their beliefs and their practice and can, therefore, "shape new directions" for improving instruction (Osterman, 1990).

The views of teachers also differ. Teachers who are "trained" are deficient in one or more areas and, according to educational experts, need to adopt specified behaviors as completely and accurately as possible. Professional development based on what Spillane (2000) calls a "quasi-cognitive perspective" assists teachers in "reconstructing their existing knowledge and beliefs, rather than the passive assimilation or rote memorization of new knowledge" (p. 17). Teachers are, according to this theory, motivated to do this not by sanctions or rewards, nor by personal intrinsic satisfaction, but by "what is good and important for learners in any given context and set of circumstances" (Grimmet & Neufeld, 1994, p. 5). This kind of motivation, called *authentic motivation*, calls for teachers to do "what is necessary and of value, not just for the organization nor just for oneself, but ultimately in the important interests of learners" (p. 5).

Education for reflective practice can take place in a variety of formats, many of them similar to those found in traditional inservice education. Beach (1994) suggests the following types of reflective practice: ongoing support groups, case studies and narratives, group discussion of classroom tapes, peer-dialogue journals, peer cross-visitation, and teacher research. Professional development centered around reflection is learner-centered, acknowledges the active role that teachers play in their own growth, and is self-perpetuating. It requires no particular programs or materials but does demand access to quality research information and expert facilitation. Conducting inservice education through this perspective demands a different type of teacher educator—one who is familiar not only with the content of the education but also with the beliefs and attitudes of the participants.

Programs of Professional Development

For many years, teachers have relied on two primary resources to support their professional growth: (1) graduate courses taken in the pursuit of an advanced degree or as required for the renewal of a teaching certificate (see Appendix B for a detailed explanation of the recertification requirements of the states in NCREL's region), and (2) mandatory school-sponsored workshops and seminars. The purpose, content, and format of these activities vary as widely as do the teachers who participate in them.

Planning professional development to meet the needs of teachers and improve the achievement of students is a complex task. In addition to the normal challenges associated with helping adults learn, professional developers also must contend with deeply ingrained assumptions about literacy and about learning, political pressures, and school structures and traditions.

> Teachers who sign up for a professional development experience expect to learn about new theories of learning or new instructional strategies. They do not expect to have their knowledge held suspect or their previous practices questioned. And admitting that you have done the wrong thing in the past or do not know the subject matter you teach is unsettling. (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 201)

According to the organizations concerned with the professional development of teachers such as those described earlier, the one-time workshop is outdated although it still survives in many school districts. If the methods used in the past to improve instruction have been ineffective,

what other methods are being used and how effective are they? In the professional literature, four broad trends in the education of teachers in the area of reading instruction emerge: best practices, university-school partnerships, coaching and mentoring, and teacher inquiry programs. Programs within these trends may incorporate some combination of training and reflective methods in their organization and procedure.

Best Practices Programs

Teacher training programs are quite common today when quick improvements are expected, even demanded, in high-need schools and school districts. These programs are often commercially funded, though not always, and focus on getting teachers to teach in a particular way. These ways of teaching can vary widely—from following explicit, step-by-step scripts to the general adoption of a theoretical framework for instruction. Many programs include components to encourage teacher reflection, and some have coaching structures in place to help teachers. What differentiates these programs from others, however, is the emphasis on the transfer of a particular type of instruction to classrooms. The following professional development programs use this method of teacher education.

Project READ

The Project READ program, based in northern California, helps teachers learn to design script-based reading lesson frames to be used with basal reading lessons. The participants attend an introductory workshop where they receive information about the concepts and procedures in the program. Then, throughout the year, experts visit schools to demonstrate various components and to observe and give feedback to teachers. The idea of using scripts for planning lessons proved to be a difficult concept in this project (Alvermann, 1990).

Kamehameha Early Education Program

The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) begins its training program by introducing theory related to reading and writing strategies to teams of principals and administrators. Master teachers who are part of the KEEP staff then demonstrate the use of the strategies. On a monthly basis, teachers are observed and given feedback regarding their implementation of the teaching strategies. This yearlong program also includes seminars, practicum experiences, and opportunities for teachers to "reflect on their current practices and how those practices change over time" (Alvermann, 1990, p. 694). Evaluation data collected from the participants indicated that this project has had a positive impact.

Follow Through

The Follow Through program is implemented through a project manager who conducts training either with individuals or groups of teachers through demonstrations. Initial training in the basic techniques of the method can be completed in just a few hours; weekly observations and feedback ensure that all educators—paraprofessionals as well as teachers—are following the model. This program has been successful only in New York City and has been deemed as mainly suitable for schools with a high teacher turnover. Teachers have been found to be "ideologically at odds with the scripting and isolated-skills focus of the program" (Meyer, cited in Alvermann, 1990).

Reading Recovery

Developed by New Zealand literacy educator Marie Clay, Reading Recovery is a program aimed exclusively at first graders who are not progressing satisfactorily in their reading development.

Reading Recovery provides professional development at three levels:

- University trainers
- Teacher leaders
- Teachers

University trainers are postdoctoral faculty members at academic institutions. They are usually trained at Ohio State University or Texas Woman's University. The training is a one-year residency program, which prepares them to train Reading Recovery teacher-leaders. After the initial preparation program, university trainers teach at least one Reading Recovery teacher-leader per year.

Teacher-leaders must have a master's degree and are selected by school districts that have made a commitment to implementing Reading Recovery. A teacher-leader attends a one-year, full-time training program. According to the Reading Recovery Council of North America (2001), the candidates teach four Reading Recovery students a day and attend graduate-level courses, clinical and leadership practicums, and seminars in reading, writing, and adult learning theory. They also participate in teacher training sessions, conduct fieldwork at established sites, attend professional conferences, and prepare their home districts for Reading Recovery implementation. After having completed teacher-leader training, the teachers teach at least two Reading Recovery students a day, conduct teacher training classes, and provide implementation leadership (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001). They also are responsible for collecting data on the Reading Recovery students in their area.

Teacher-leaders, in turn, prepare teachers to teach Reading Recovery. Teachers participate in a full academic year of training during a three-hour class one day a week. In addition to classes, the teachers instruct four Reading Recovery students a day, and they are observed at least four times by a teacher-leader. After the initial year of training, Reading Recovery teachers attend at least six continuing contact sessions each year conducted by teacher leaders. At least four of these sessions include observing a lesson through a one-way mirror (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001).

The evaluation of Reading Recovery is reported in terms of increases in student achievement, but some study has been done of the impact of the training on teachers. Through bimonthly reflections, interviews, questionnaires, and observations, researchers found that the program did help teachers "make their implicit theories of reading and writing explicit" (Alvermann, 1990, p. 697-698). Researchers found that teachers (1) became more confident in their ability to meet district accountability requirements, (2) moved from a skills-based approach to a more holistic orientation, and (3) accepted responsibility for flexibility in decision making that was grounded in personal theories about literacy instruction (Alvermann, 1990).

SRA/Open Court Reading

Many commercial reading series provide professional development along with textbooks. One of these, SRA/Open Court Reading, offers a range of services to train teachers to use the materials effectively. For example, an inservice proposal for a school district purchasing SRA/Open Court materials would include a minimum of one full-day of training for total program implementation and one half-day of training for phonics-only implementation. SRA/Open Court would then complete two-to-three follow-up sessions per building to observe teachers, conduct demonstration lessons, and assist school-based lead teachers in their first year of implementation (J. Welty, personal communication, August 7, 2001).

During the second year, the publisher provides one to two follow-up sessions per building. For an additional charge, SRA/Open Court will provide extra days of on-site support and regional training for new teachers (J. Welty, personal communication, August 7, 2001).

University-Based Programs

The link between university teacher education programs and public schools has a long and complicated history. Universities produce educational research and provide undergraduate courses. In addition, countless programs exist that foster interaction among students and faculty at both institutions. Marshall (1994) describes three ways, in addition to those just mentioned, that universities serve teachers:

- Universities offer graduate courses "designed specifically for teachers, offered usually in the summer or the evening, and meant to provide teachers with new understandings and new knowledge from new research." (p. 162)

- Individuals within universities provide consulting services for beginning-of-year and after-school workshops or "longer and more ambiguous programs that call for daylong meetings, released time for selected teachers, and ongoing relationships between university and school staff." (p. 162)

- "Individuals within universities are usually the ones who oversee, edit, or sometimes write the textbooks that will be made available to teachers and students in the schools." (p. 162)

Efforts to reform schools also aim at university teacher-preparation programs, and consequently, both institutions are looking for new ways to collaborate. In addition to traditional graduate programs, universities are expanding their roles to include professional development schools, various types of clinical faculty, and teachers-in-residence programs.

Graduate Courses

Teachers take graduate courses for a variety of reasons. Certainly, their own professional growth is a motivating factor. In addition, school districts provide significant pay increases for courses completed, and some even help pay for these credits. Most states require additional coursework past the bachelor's degree for recertification. As a result, graduate coursework for teachers is thriving and is a significant part of most schools of education.

In spite of the wide-scale acceptance of the value of graduate coursework, little research exists to either confirm or deny its benefit in improving literacy instruction for students. Three studies—Lollis (1996), Faulkner (1995), and Agee (2000)—discuss the impact of graduate courses on teaching.

Lollis (1996) was concerned that the elementary teachers with whom she worked had not changed their instruction in spite of extensive staff development and purchased programs. She felt this lack of change was due to their lack of understanding of literacy theory. She developed a course emphasizing theory and concluded that as a result of taking this course, a group of 25 teachers significantly changed their literacy beliefs toward a whole language perspective.

Another university professor of literacy education, Faulkner (1995), taught a course to elementary teachers that aimed at helping them understand the theory behind whole-language literacy instruction and giving them guidance in putting the theory to work in their classrooms. She felt she was generally successful; however, some of the most important measurements were dropped from the study.

Perhaps the impact of graduate course work is realized only over time, as teachers enroll in a number of courses and work with students between and while they are studying. Agee (2000) studied two experienced English teachers enrolled in doctoral programs focusing on the factors that shaped their literature instruction, especially graduate work emphasizing theories and approaches described as Willinsky's "new literacy." This study describes the ways that two secondary English teachers viewed their teaching of literature and how these views have emerged as a result of their experiences and their graduate study. The researcher found two themes that emerged from these teachers' efforts to sustain what they believed to be effective practices among competing theories and conflicting demands and expectations. First, they engaged in a "multi-dimensional reflective process" through which "they used funds of knowledge from a variety of settings to negotiate among conflicting theoretical premises and to articulate their practices in terms of particular students in particular settings" (Agee, 2000). Second, they "both grounded theories on teaching and reading literature in the realities of their personal and professional lives" (Agee, 2000).

Professional Development Schools

In the 1986 publication *Tomorrow's Teachers,* the Holmes Group, a consortium of Schools of Education, made several recommendations to reform teacher education in this country. One of these recommendations was the formation of "professional development schools," which they felt would strengthen the link between the educational theory of the university and the everyday practice of the classroom. Based on the model of a teaching hospital in the medical profession, these institutions would be structured according to the following principles:

- Reciprocity or mutual exchange and benefit between research and practice.
- Experimentation or willingness to try new forms of practice and structure.
- Systematic inquiry, or the requirement that new ideas be subject to careful study and validation.

- Student diversity, or commitment to the development of teaching strategies for a broad range of children with different backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles. (Holmes Group, p. 67)

Clearly, the intent of Professional Development Schools is that in addition to providing future teachers with realistic experiences in classrooms, the teachers in the schools also would benefit from their interaction with preservice teachers and the attention they must pay to their own practice in order to communicate effectively with the preservice teachers.

Although most of the research conducted in Professional Development Schools and other clinical sites for teacher education focuses on preservice educators, two studies look at their impact on practicing teachers. A Professional Development Laboratory in New York City provides teachers with release time to observe and study with expert teachers in a variety of areas, including guided reading, whole language, and teaching writing. A survey returned by 25 percent of the participating teachers indicated that 93 percent of those responding were satisfied with the program, and many teachers reported changing their instructional patterns (Snyder, 1994).

A unique program at the University of Utah combined several methods of professional development in one program. Not satisfied with the teacher growth that occurs tangentially through interaction with preservice teachers, the developers of this program set out a more structured process to support teacher growth. A two-year Masters Cooperative Program located in seven local schools brought together groups of 20 to 25 teachers to take courses and conduct research related to their classroom practice. An in-depth study of these teachers indicated that "their new roles as change agents were sustained throughout the years following completion of the Co-op" (Crow, Stokes, Kauchak, Hobbs, & Bullough, 1996, p. 7).

As a result of their experiences with the Co-op, teachers reported an increase in confidence, an ability to "state and defend their beliefs among colleagues, administrators, and parents" (Crow et al., 1996, p. 8). This confidence enabled the participants to take a stronger voice in school and have a greater influence on reform efforts. A teacher who did not participate in the Co-op program commented, "Yes, we wouldn't have any reforms at all if we hadn't had some teachers reading research" (p. 16). Another said, "Our reading program became almost totally whole language because our Co-op group...worked together to get real books back into the reading curriculum" (p. 17).

The influence on the classroom teachers participating in the graduate program was attributed in part to the yearlong action research project they conducted as part of their coursework. An atmosphere of inquiry was promoted throughout the program, and teachers were encouraged to think in-depth about their teaching and the teaching in their schools. One participant said, "I really think the personal research had the greatest impact on me because that is what made me realize I am a teacher-researcher and would want to continue that" (Crow et al., 1996, p. 11). Although this study revealed mostly positive results from the program, not all indicators reflect success. For example, there was no evidence of any school change at the junior high school Professional Development School. In addition, some teachers did not appreciate the focus of the program on self-study and reflection (Crow et al., 1996).

Teachers in Residence

An idea that has become quite popular within higher education is the hiring of classroom teachers for a year or two to participate as faculty in Schools of Education. The purpose of such programs is generally "to provide undergraduate students with a master teacher classroom practitioner and to employ adjunct staff with recent teaching experiences who could sensitize faculty to the issues and problems in today's classrooms" (Daane & Waltman, 1999, p. 41).

One of the longest-running Teacher-in-Residence programs is at the University of Alabama. Since 1985, teachers have been employed as full-time faculty in elementary education. Applicants for this position must have at least a master's degree, several years of documented successful teaching experience at the elementary level, and letters of recommendation from principals and others who can attest to their teaching ability. Upon selection, the teachers in residence serve for two years with the rank of instructor while continuing to receive salary and benefits from their school district (Daane & Waltman, 1999).

The duties of the teachers in residence vary from university to university and from semester to semester. Because language arts is a significant component of all elementary teacher education, teachers in residence often are placed in these courses. A typical schedule would be similar to the one experienced by Mary Beth, who during her first semester, taught Introduction to Elementary Schools and supervised student teachers. The following two semesters, she taught reading, language arts, and classroom management (Kagan, Dennis, Igou, Moore, & Sparks, 1993).

Another program with a slightly different focus placed teachers in residence at school sites working with university supervisors to supervise and mentor preservice teachers while student teaching. The initiators of this program expected it to "foster working relationships that were mutually beneficial both to the university and the school…[so] that both groups of faculty would experience professional gains through their participation" (Lemma, Ferrara, & Leone, 1998).

Although, one of the goals of Teacher-in-Residence programs is the professional growth of the classroom teacher, little research has been conducted on that aspect of the programs. One teacher in residence describes what she learned from the experience:

> I…learned to facilitate the development of teacher candidates. Though they are adults, developmentally, they are beginners in the teaching profession. At first, I had difficulty knowing what to expect of them. I would be surprised, sometimes, by what they did not know and what they chose to focus on. (Lemma et al., 1998)

Various research studies report different responses of teachers to their time as teachers in residence. The most commonly reported result is increased confidence, attributed to being respected by university faculty and students. Others report being better able to "[blend] the theory they had read about and taught in the college classroom with the teaching practices in their elementary classrooms" (Daane & Waltman, 1999, p. 43).

Several former teachers in residence, reflecting on their learning from the experiences, reported that their time at the university gave a "new credibility to ideas I've always had" (Kagan et al., 1993, p. 430). They did not return to their classrooms with innovative insights and improved

instructional techniques but, instead, used this opportunity to "clarify what these seasoned practitioners had always known and believed about their craft" (Kagan et al., 1993, p. 432-433).

Coaching and Mentoring

The concept of peer coaching and mentoring as a means of professional development is gaining favor in many school systems. Derived from a reflective practice theoretical foundation, this format provides long-term support for teachers and is integrally connected with classroom practice.

Peer Coaching

One program places students working on doctorates in curriculum and supervision with classroom teachers as peer coaches. Two principles support this program:

- The design and implementation of the program emphasizes the "role of the teacher as the key instructional decision-maker for his or her classroom." (Hillkirk & Nolan, 1990, p. 7)

- In direct opposition to a training model, "the reflective coach's role would be to support and foster the teacher's self-analysis and reflection as objectively and nonjudgmentally as possible." (Hillkirk & Nolan, 1990, p. 7)

The reflective coaching program includes several components, designed to encourage in-depth reflection and improved instruction. First, participants attend ten workshops on current learning theory spaced throughout the year. In addition, five days are allotted for training mentors in reflective coaching techniques. Each teacher is observed at least ten times with pre- and post-conferences conducted with each observation. This program is extended into the second year when those teachers who were mentored in the first year become coaches for 50 of their colleagues under the direction of the district's first Coordinator of Staff Development.

Building Resource Teachers

Another program using an approach centered on teacher mentoring and coaching began in 1990 in Douglas County, Colorado. Dissatisfied with the results of inservice education primarily delivered by traveling experts and specialists, the school district instituted a new program. This plan places a Building Resource Teacher (BRT) at each elementary and middle school. A year is spent preparing teachers, administrators, staff, and the community for this new model. The BRT is responsible for "coaching new teachers, supporting curriculum implementation in all disciplines, planning and implementing building staff development, and providing resources and support for gifted and talented programming" (Hayes, Gripe, & Hall, 1999).

The lessons they learned from this experience were as follows:

- Time matters.
- Involve everyone.
- Pay attention to the change process.
- Keep the information flowing.
- You have to take risks.

Although little is known about the details of this program, the district did conduct yearly evaluations by surveying teachers, including the building resource teachers, administrators, and school secretaries. They found that the "BRTs were seen as valuable coaches for all teachers, and especially valuable as mentors to new teachers. Teachers said the building-based BRTs were much more accessible than the traveling specialists had been, and that BRTs provided better ongoing support" (Hayes et al, 1990).

Success for All

Professional development is a significant part of this school reform package, which emphasizes reading. The program begins with a three-day training session in which teachers participate in simulations and demonstrations of various teaching methods they will be expected to use with the program. After the school year begins, a school facilitator, typically a very experienced teacher with a background in reading or early childhood learning, is responsible for coaching teachers in implementation of the program.

The role of the facilitator is crucial to the success of the program. These individuals must be seen as a friend and supporter to the teachers and therefore do not have a formal or informal role in teacher evaluation. Teachers should always be glad to see the facilitator in their classrooms and should feel free to share problems as well as successes (Slavin & Madden, 2001, p. 263).

Facilitators work with teachers in a variety of ways, but the most common method is through classroom visits and follow-up discussions. They also give model lessons or cover teachers' classes while the teachers observe a colleague who is doing an exemplary job at implementing the curriculum and instructional techniques (Slavin & Madden, 2001).

Action Research

Action research is another approach that follows the reflective practice approach to teacher development. Teachers conduct action research in their own classrooms as they investigate problems of interest to them, systematically collecting data, analyzing their findings, and taking action on what they have learned. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) describe teacher research:

> The emphasis here is on professional education that is about posing, not just answering, questions, interrogating one's own and others' practices and assumptions, and making classrooms sites for inquiry—that is, learning how to teach and improve one's teaching by collecting and analyzing the "data" of daily life in schools. (p. 17)

Holm, Hunter, and Welling (1999) give four reasons to support action research as a method to help teachers develop professionally:

- Action research can improve student learning as teachers read about and try new instructional, curricular, and assessment innovations.

- Teaching effectiveness improves as teachers systematically experiment and reflect on instructional, curricular, and assessment innovations.

- Action research contributes to teachers' development as professionals as they share what they have learned with colleagues and preservice students.

- Action research can assist teachers in overcoming the isolation that is commonly experienced by classroom teachers. (p. 11)

After reviewing Holm, Hunter, and Welling's (1999) four reasons for supporting action research in the professional development process, it is important to view six core interactive methods for conducting action research. These methods provide an effective process for linking assessment and evaluation to quality instruction:

- **Practice as Inquiry.** This method becomes an ongoing research inquiry. Practice becomes inquiry when the practitioners systematically identify a problem, search for possible causes and solutions, test those solutions in practice, validate their observations, and then disseminate their findings (North, 1987).

- **Narrative Inquiry.** This method allows teachers to explore their personal histories in an effort to understand who they are and how that impacts on what they value and what they teach. The evidence or key information consists of narrative accounts of significant teaching moments. These documented narrative accounts help teachers understand their values and priorities. The narrative inquiry method provides teachers with insight into their decision-making process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

- **Traditional Teacher Research.** This method compiles different sorts of evidence, such as documentary evidence of various types of journal entries; students' work; and policy documents from schools, state departments, and newspaper accounts. The primary focus is to help teachers understand the various influences on their decision making as professionals through a process of identifying and examining constraints and pressures that impact on their daily work (Rudduck & Hopkins, 1985).

- **Critical Inquiry.** This method explores political issues from the onset. The evidence or important information consists of policy documents, correspondence of all kinds, newspaper sources, and students' work. The analytical tools used in critical inquiry are used to take a political view of schooling, learning, and teaching (Boomer, 1987; Smyth, 1992).

- **Case Study.** This method provides careful, detailed examinations of an individual student, a group, or even a school or district. The focus is to learn from the situation. Case studies help teachers realize how to perform in the teaching-learning process by helping them to discover the kinds of decisions they make and to think about the theoretical reasons for making them (i.e., linking research theory to practice). The evidence and important information can consist of personal reflections; lessons plans; student work; and student, parent, and colleague interviews. Case-study action research helps teachers learn from students, thereby increasing the teaching-learning enterprise (Winter, 1986).

- **Schön's Reflective Practice.** This method offers a variety of techniques for exploring one's own professional work (having thinking time). In this method, the teacher/researcher is attempting to make his or her own understanding problematic to himself or herself. All research findings are the teachers' construction of reality or reflection (Schön, 1987).

Action research can be an effective part of the daily teaching process. The following key operational elements of action research are procedural guidelines for district, schoolwide, and classroom action research.

1. Identify an area of focus or problem.
2. Write an area-of-focus statement or problem statement.
3. Define the variable factors that might affect the outcome.
4. Determine research questions.
5. Describe the intervention/methods and innovations.
6. Identify and describe the roles of key members of the action planning research team.
7. Describe negotiations that need to be covered.
8. Develop a timeline.
9. Describe the resources needed.
10. Develop data collection plans.
11. Carry out the action research.
12. Analyze and interpret the data/results.
13. Make sound recommendations based on the results.
14. Develop action plans and interventions based on the results. (Young, 2000)

Action researchers must look at authentic ways of collecting data as it naturally occurs in the teaching and learning process. Authentic assessment that is linked to the action research plan could provide this necessary naturalistic information. The following techniques are useful for linking authentic assessment to action research as it relates to student information (Young, 2000):

- Kid talk (general everyday talk about experiences and learning)
- Interviews (diagnostic in nature)
- Teacher/student conferences (conversations on progress and planning for increasing student/teacher progress)
- Teacher-to teacher talk (sharing reflections on the topic under consideration)
- Observations by:
    - Teachers
    - Administrators
    - Parents
    - Students

Observations should be ongoing, regular, systematically recorded, and synthesized from different contexts:

- Teacher anecdotal note-taking
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Checklists
- Individual student portfolios
- Student groups or classroom portfolio exhibitions
- Performance samples, such as:
    - Short assessment tasks/open-ended tasks
    - Concepts maps
    - Self-evaluation learning logs
    - Provocative prompts
    - Individual and group problem-solving tasks
    - Student group processing and reporting

The action research model for professional development is extremely reflective in nature. Just as it is important to look at authentic ways to get naturalistic information from the teaching and learning process when students are analyzed, it is equally important to use authentic ways to look at naturalistic information from teachers. These authentic techniques not only provide insight into naturalistic information but also empower teachers' reflection for the development of teachers as researchers, leaders, and reformers for the advancement of instructional practices and schoolwide improvement. The following techniques are useful for teacher reflection and the gathering of naturalistic information (Young, 2000):

Reflective Writing

Journals

- Documenting events for reflections
- Sharing concerns
- Asking questions

Portfolio Kits

- Creating anecdotes and running recorders
- Creating checklists
- Planning lessons for lesson studies

Problem Solving

Investigating

- Defining problems
- Strategic planning for change

Interactive Articulation

Dialogue

- Sharing success and failures
- Sharing concerns and action research questions
- Sharing actions

After completing the action research process, participants can ask the following reflective questions. These questions will help with evaluating the effectiveness of the action research endeavor and the strategic planning for future action research projects.

- Did action research lead to a positive and constructive outcome?
- Were the needs of the intended audience met through the action research project?
- Has a report been prepared for dissemination with the intent to gain support for the findings and instructional needs or school improvement needs?
- Does the report clearly delineate the strengths and weaknesses of the action research project?
- How did colleagues and key stakeholders respond to the findings and the actions recommended by the action research report?
- How has the action research effort contributed to professional development and reflective views concerning the teaching and learning process?
- How has the action research impacted students?
- What action(s) will be used to move forward?
- Is there a clear connection between the action and the analysis and interpretation of the data?
- How will the effects of the practice be monitored, and what things need to be done differently? (Young, 2000) (See Appendix C for a chart to help guide action research projects.)

According to its supporters, action research is a unique way in which to foster teacher learning because it respects the role of the "teacher as knower and as agent in the classroom and in larger educational contexts" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 16). Unlike training programs that presume deficiencies in teachers, action research programs assume that teachers have extensive expertise and knowledge and ask teachers to exercise that knowledge in grappling with issues related to their specific teaching and learning situation. Hollingsworth (1994) explains, "Acting as researchers gives teachers personal and professional power through which they feel free to make significant changes for their students and defend those changes to administrative challenge" (p. 86). Teacher action research "provides support for an innovation without prescribing what the specific changes in classroom practice must be or how they are to come about" (Grimmett, 1995, p. 124).

Kyle and Hovda (1987) found that "practitioners have 'discovered' action research through university coursework or through some type of sponsored project, and in most instances their projects have focused on solving some type of problem" (p. 170). Although professional

conferences often present the results of these studies, a few researchers have looked at the action research process itself.

Ethnographic Research

One action research study involved a group of Arizona teachers who conducted ethnographic research about language and literacy within a Mexican community in Tucson, Arizona. The project had three components:

- **Community:** An ethnographic study of the origin, use, and distribution of funds of knowledge among households in a predominantly Mexican working-class community of Tucson, Arizona.

- **After-School Teacher "Labs":** Study groups created to enhance the collaboration between teacher researchers and university-based researchers; to discuss research findings; and to plan, develop, and support innovations in instruction.

- **Schools:** Classroom studies to examine existing methods of instruction and to implement innovations based on the household study of funds of knowledge and conceptualized in the after-school labs. (Gonzalez, et al., 1993, pp. 2-3)

The teachers who participated in this project found the research a personally and professionally transforming experience. They attributed their new understandings to two factors: (1) "the orientation to the households as containing funds of knowledge" and (2) "the reflexive process and study group meetings after the visits" (Gonzalez et al., pp. 7-8). One teacher commented, "That was the only time I had ever talked about how I was teaching and why I was teaching that way, and how that related to how I perceived children to learn" (p. 8).

British Columbia Project

Another teacher research project was formed in British Columbia to "support teachers who came together to inquire in a focused way into issues of curriculum, teaching and student learning" (Grimmett, 1995, p. 113). The British Columbia Ministry of Education funded groups of teacher researchers that totaled 120 teachers in 12 school districts. One teacher described the reflective experience: "By sharing observations, I am forced to reflect on my methods. This reflective process is qualitatively different from my personal reflections, as others' insights force my ideas to move forward to a place I could not have reached myself' (p. 120).

The authors conclude that in order for programs such as this to succeed, teachers need "structures that provide teachers with support, stability, and affirmation while simultaneously encouraging intellectual challenge and a tolerance for ambiguity" (Grimmett, 1995, p. 120). Thus, the professional development process provides a "culture or soil in which seeds of ideas and principles...are allowed to grow" (p. 118).

Researching Teachers in Residence

In an effort to encourage more minority teachers to become researchers, Grambling State University in Louisiana began a program called Researching Teachers in Residence. This program has two components: (1) to give practicing teachers access to university researchers so

they could investigate problems from their own teaching, and (2) to expose future teachers to the formal research process (Newman, 1994). There are no selection criteria for admittance to this program; anyone interested in educational research is welcome to join. Participants meet frequently with a university advisor, who helps guide them through the research process by helping turn their practical questions into viable research studies. Then the teacher researchers are supported and guided through the process as they investigate problems of their own choosing (Newman, 1994).

The researchers who studied this program found two levels of results:

- The direct analysis and interpretation of data from the teacher and preservice teacher-generated research projects.

- Attitudes toward research, knowledge of the research process, and utilizing knowledge gained from the process in formative and summative evaluations to enhance future research endeavors. (Newman, 1994, p. 10)

Content-Area Literacy Project

Hollingsworth (1994) facilitated a support group for teacher researchers in the area of the literacy instruction for linguistically and culturally diverse learners. This project, which lasted for several years, included elementary and secondary teachers who worked with a university educator to clarify and analyze the learning and teaching that was going on in their classrooms. The experience was a powerful one for all the participants because their relationships and knowledge grew as they struggled through the process of investigating their teaching. For example, Hollingsworth describes the change in emphasis and understanding: "If Year 2 was marked by 'If it's fun and interesting, they'll learn to read,' then Year 3 was marked by 'There is no best way to teach reading' " (p. 113).

One of the teachers in the project, Anna Richert (cited in Hollingsworth, 1994), describes the growth she experienced:

- Confidence "that continued to grow beyond the course boundaries."
- "A realization of the importance of self in epistemological development."
- "A realization of the importance of 'others' to clarify and construct knowledge."
- "The generation of an inquiry stance that continued to be transformative after the course ended and resulted in new critical themes and a view of the knowledge of teaching as problematic."
- "A spirit of community and lasting alliance to support both personal and professional growth." (p. 229)

Inquiry Support Groups

Innovative, student-centered instruction requires significant emotional and intellectual commitment from teachers. Groups of colleagues that support, challenge, and provide a sounding board for teacher reflection can help teachers improve their own instruction. Such structures, according to Grimmett (1995) can "enable teachers to engage professionally in continuous,

public and systematic examination and critique of substantive suggestions for change in the educational programmes of schools" (p. 120).

Several programs in the reflective practice tradition focus on teachers as active agents in their own learning and encourage the careful and systematic analysis of their practice through various structures such as support groups. Although these projects may have a particular view of instruction in mind, their implementation in teacher development is fundamentally different than those training programs whose aim is a particular type of instructional behavior.

Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative

The Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative is an example of an inquiry support group. Begun in 1978 as a way for teachers to continue meeting after the closing of the local teacher center, it was formed "as a teacher collective to support inquiry about practice" (Buchanan, 1994, p. 41).

The Metcalf Project and the Benchmark School

Two other similar programs, the Metcalf Project and the Benchmark School, are described by Alvermann (1990) in his review of professional development for teachers of reading and language arts. The Metcalf Project was "a three-year collaboration between teachers and researchers whose goal was to explore language arts instruction through an inquiry-oriented staff-development program that looked upon teaching as a continuing experiment" (p. 696). The Benchmark School was opened to help bright children who struggled with reading. Its mission was to involve teachers in "identifying instructional problems, field-testing alternative practices, and making decisions about which practices to implement" (p. 696). The evaluation of both these programs indicated that "teachers are willing to consider alternative reading and writing practices and to make changes in their instructional routines when they have been active participants in the change process" (p. 696).

National Board Certification

Although technically not a professional development program, National Board Certification has played and will continue to play a role in the improvement of instruction in this country. After the publication of *A Nation at Risk,* the Carnegie Task Force recommended the creation of a set of rigorous standards to identify highly accomplished teachers, and this task led to the formation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2001). National Board Certification focuses on the teacher as a reflective decision-maker. The process of applying for this certification involves the accumulation of evidence—including personal narrations, student work, and videotapes—to support proficiency in standards created by the board. The materials are submitted by the teachers in a "box" along with the various required forms and documentation. These materials undergo a rigorous examination by trained evaluators, all of whom must be practicing classroom teachers.

The process by which teachers become board certified is highly respected and generally considered to be of value in improving teacher effectiveness. Consequently, several states and local school districts provide support in various ways, such as paying all or part of the $2,300 registration fee, providing graduate courses to help teachers through the complicated application

process, and awarding pay increases with successful completion. Iowa, for example, gives its National Board-certified teachers $2,500 a year for ten years (Associated Press, 2001).

According to a survey conducted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2001), nearly all teachers reported being involved in at least one type of leadership activity; the average number of leadership activities in which board-certified teachers participated was ten. The most common forms of leadership were the following:

- Mentoring or coaching other candidates for National Board Certification.
- Mentoring or coaching new or struggling teachers.
- Developing or selecting programs or materials to improve student achievement.
- School or district leadership. (NBPTS, 2001)

Evaluation of Professional Development

Literacy education always has been a national and local concern, and substantial funds have and will continue to be dedicated to the professional development of teachers responsible for teaching students to read. As funding opportunities increase, so do demands for accountability. Professional developers must be committed to answering the question "How is this professional development activity improving student reading achievement?" Staff development in reading education takes a variety of forms, and these different methods use a wide range of evaluation techniques.

In his book *Evaluating Professional Development*, Guskey (2000), lists three mistakes that are often made in evaluations of professional development:

- They focus on "documentation" rather than evaluation.
- They are too shallow and do not address meaningful indicators of success.
- They are too brief and extend over too short a time period (p. 8).

He suggests a five-tiered method of evaluation that measures all aspects of the staff development experience:

- Participants' reaction to the experience.
- Participants' learning.
- How the organization supports the goals of the professional development.
- Participants' use of what they have learned.
- Impact on student learning. (Guskey, 2000)

By far, the most thoroughly evaluated programs are those commercial reading plans such as Success for All and Reading Recovery, which include large-scale training and assessment. Because improvement in student test scores is the most important marketing strategy these programs use, it stands to reason that they include this kind of information in all their materials. Much of this research, however, is conducted by the program itself (Slavin & Madden, 2001), and it does not address all the components recommended by Guskey.

Action research by its definition includes an evaluation process since it is based on teachers' experiences in their classrooms as they target problems and conduct research to find solutions. The literature abounds with practical information about action research (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Freeman, 1998; Parsons & Brown, 2001), yet little research exists on the action research process and its impact on student learning. This method of fostering teacher growth is based on sound theoretical principles of learning, but it also needs more rigorous evaluation.

Inquiry groups and coaching programs also are based on sound educational psychology principles, but their evaluation has been relatively weak. Those programs that have been evaluated fully have usually been the subject of qualitative research of some type by a full-time researcher, a method that is simply not practical for school districts interested in implementing these types of reflective programs.

By far, the majority of professional development programs for all teachers are conducted within higher education through university courses and advanced degrees. These programs are generally unaccountable to anyone for their impact on teaching and learning. It is natural to assume that more education means better teachers. All graduate education is not created equal, however, and this method of improving instruction could certainly bear more scrutiny.

The same can be said for collaborations between universities and schools in professional development schools and other structures organized to foster growth both in preservice and inservice education. Evaluation needs to specify the impact of these experiences on student learning and the structures that can optimize the positive effects.

Less formal connections between the university and schools also comprise a large percentage of professional development; local schools and school districts hire university professors as consultants to conduct short- or long-term workshops and inservice sessions. These professional developers are generally hired based on word-of-mouth recommendations, and the activities they provide rarely undergo the rigorous evaluation process recommended by Guskey.

A final method of professional development is just beginning to take form in NCREL's region and around the country. Instead of or in addition to the traditional credit accumulation required by state departments of education for recertification, many states are requiring a professional development portfolio, similar in format although not in depth to that required by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Although these programs theoretically hold great promise, only long-term and in-depth research will tell what the results will be as they relate to improvement in teaching and student learning.

The Role of Administration in Professional Development

Teacher development is dependent on school and district leadership for guidance and support. Even the most well-designed plans of professional developers and reflective teachers are likely to fail without the support of principals and other administrators.

In his study of district leaders' beliefs about professional development, Spillane (2000) found what he called a "quasi-behaviorist" perspective prevalent in 85 percent of the districts he studied. These programs consisted primarily of explanations and demonstrations of preferred teaching behaviors. The teacher knowledge presented was fragmented, "treated in separate chunks—content knowledge, knowledge about teaching strategies, knowledge about materials and technology" (p. 10). Teachers were expected to integrate this knowledge somehow into improved practice. The formats used in this type of professional development included workshops, in-class demonstration lessons, videotapes, and curricular materials; teachers were motivated to participate through a variety of external motivators such as rewards and sanctions (Spillane, 2000).

Another study took a different perspective on the administrative role in the development of language arts teachers in particular. Researchers examined the relationships between district-level language arts administrators and teachers through observations of the central office staff, examination of state department data, and documents created by the central office staff (Confer, 1999).

In this study, district language arts administrators valued: (1) understanding current research and sharing this research with teachers, (2) remaining grounded in the classroom by ongoing interaction with classroom teachers, and (3) "knowing what's good for students and teachers and having a passion for doing it" (Confer, 1999). Certainly administrators can either support or impede the goals of professional development for literacy educators in many ways through allocation of funds, openness to innovation, and teacher evaluation. Their participation must be a major consideration in any attempts to improve literacy instruction.

Recommendations

Literacy educators know that the future holds many challenges. Through careful planning, these challenges can lead to better reading instruction and ultimately to better readers. An examination of the policies, research, and practice related to the professional development of literacy teachers leads to the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Focus professional development activities first on teachers' beliefs and second on literacy instruction methods.

The instructional habits are difficult to change. Professional developers must address the beliefs of teachers about change, research, and literacy instruction at a personal level. As Beach (1994) explains, "For change to occur in instruction, teachers themselves need to articulate the need for change, develop plans for making changes, and implement and evaluate these efforts toward change" (p. 144).

Some teachers may approach inservice education with the expectation that right answers exist and these answers just need to be given to them. Some teachers also may believe that time spent in the self-study necessary for reflective practice can be a waste of time. This point of view was expressed by one of the participants in the University of Utah's co-op program:

> If you truly want me to be a better teacher, give me practical, hands-on, and useful things.... The program by far [was] too much research-oriented. I spent hours researching professional magazines and writing research papers when my time could have been better spent creating clever curriculum materials to use in my class. Not a thing I did with research helped me become a better teacher. (cited in Crow et al., p. 13)

Reflection can be a powerful learning tool, but its value must be recognized by learners. Part of the responsibility of professional developers must be to convince teachers of the value of the kind of self-reflection that is necessary for growth.

Recommendation 2: Make the necessary time, personnel, and financial commitment to ensure successful professional development.

Ferguson's (1991) study of more than 1,000 school districts concluded that every additional dollar spent on highly qualified teachers brought about greater improvements in students' achievement than any other use of school resources.

Organizations concerned with the growth of teachers are unanimous in their support of long-term inservice education. Experts visiting for one, two, or even three workshop sessions cannot begin to provide teachers with the experiences and information they need to sustain growth in literacy instruction. The public certainly has a right to expect accountability for any kind of educational reform, but expectations must be realistic and schools must be allowed enough time to adapt new ideas to their own situations.

Recommendation 3: Use appropriate training methods as part of a total professional development program.

Part of what keeps teachers from being truly reflective and continuously inquiring into their own practice may be a lack of the skills necessary to analyze and examine their teaching. Some of these skills are known. For example, reflective teachers must be careful observers of both the overt and subtle behaviors in their classrooms. They also must be aware of their own biases and points of view, and they must be able to look at their own practice with a critical eye.

In addition, there may be literacy practices that are unfamiliar to teachers. Some teachers may not be proficient readers themselves and, therefore, may be unable to perform such reading strategies as metacognition, identifying different kinds of text structure, or drawing conclusions and making predictions. Teachers who do not possess these skills must acquire them before they can help children develop them, and a training model of instruction would be appropriate for this kind of knowledge.

Recommendation 4: Thoroughly evaluate literacy professional development programs using a variety of criteria that includes, but is not limited to, student achievement and teaching behaviors.

Staff development programs must undergo rigorous evaluation if they are to produce the desired results in student achievement. Enjoyable workshops that do not ask teachers to rethink fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning will not have long-term effects on instruction. Likewise, professional development experiences that do not engage or meet the individual needs of teachers in their classrooms also will not affect instruction. Professional development activities evaluated through forms distributed at the end of workshop sessions asking for teachers' opinions should be a thing of the past. Teachers have participated in too much inservice education that has not resulted in improved learning for students. Professional development programs must undergo more comprehensive accountability standards, and this accountability must cover all aspects of inservice education.

Recommendation 5: The professional development of practicing literacy teachers must become a priority in the research agenda of educational researchers.

The literature on inservice teacher education is full of practical, how-to articles describing programs, but it is very short on high-quality research of these programs. The purpose of literacy research is to benefit the professional development of teachers and the learning of children. The transfer of this information into the classroom is of primary importance. If the research about how individuals learn to read and grow as readers does not get transferred into the classroom, all the work is in vain. Such a significant component to the learning process seems to require a research agenda of its own.

Conclusion

The public outcry for changes in schools that bring about greater achievement for all students demands that those responsible for the professional development for teachers pay attention to what is known about how teachers learn to improve their practice. Programs aimed at improving the reading ability of children must take into account not only what research says about instruction but also what research says about how adults learn and, in particular, how teachers think about the act of teaching.

America's children deserve the best teaching available. Children deserve teachers who care enough about their own learning and the learning of their students to continuously engage in professional growth. Children also deserve administrators and policymakers who understand what they should do to support that growth. As long as children and classrooms remain individual and unpredictable, teachers cannot be trained to mimic effective instructional strategies. To grow, teachers must develop new understandings based on research and its application in the classroom; they must know how to transfer those understandings to the everyday world of their classrooms; and they must engage in all of these behaviors continuously in an effort to increase their expertise and students' achievement. Teachers and children all over the country have suffered from professional development efforts that focused on short-term, poorly constructed, and poorly evaluated inservice workshops conducted without regard to how teachers learn and how they think about their teaching. Such efforts leave teachers cynical and disengaged, unable to use their expertise and knowledge to improve their own practice.

The stakes are too high to take this issue lightly. The voices supporting quality professional development for teachers must be loud and clear, and these voices must reflect what has been learned from decades of efforts to help teachers improve their classroom practice.

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Appendix A

Guidelines for Professional Development

Guidelines for effective professional development are provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Staff Development Council, the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, and the Learning First Alliance.

U.S. Department of Education

According to the U.S. Department of Education, high-quality professional development does the following:

- Focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school.
- Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
- Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the community.
- Reflects the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
- Enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.
- Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.
- Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development.
- Requires substantial time and other resources.
- Is driven by a coherent long-term plan.
- Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.
- Guides subsequent professional development efforts. (U. S. Department of Education, 1998)

The National Staff Development Council

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), founded in 1969, promotes the success of all students through high-quality professional development. Such professional development ranges from training programs with long-term support to methods such as action research and coaching. NSDC believes that "staff development is fundamentally people improvement" (NSDC, 2001) and has developed standards to guide professional development programs and practices. Revised in 2001, these standards are divided into three areas: context, process, and content.

Context Standards – Effective professional development:

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

Process Standards – Effective professional development:

- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making.
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

Content Standards – Effective professional development:

- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (National Staff Development Council, 2001)

National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement

The National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement is a research and development center funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) to improve the literacy achievement of all students. Its framework for professional development in the English language arts has the following characteristics:

- Effective professional development is problem based and involves teachers in activities that have authentic educational change as its goal.
- Effective professional development is also practice based, focusing on the goals, materials, curriculum, and students that are part of the teachers' daily professional realities.
- A professional discourse community involving diverse groups of professionals provides a dialogic context within which debate, examination of assumptions, exploration of existing practice, and formulation of new possibilities move the group toward greater coherence.
- A dual focus on both conceptual and pedagogical tools enables teachers to deepen their own understandings of the ways they teach while also broadening their repertoire of successful classroom techniques.
- Successful professional development provides teachers with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their own practices.
- Successful professional development provides teachers with ways to assess their own progress in instructional development activities. (National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, 1998)

Appendix B

Teacher License Renewal in the NCREL Region

For many years, teacher license renewal has been accomplished through the accumulation of credits and/or courses either through colleges and universities or through local and state education agencies. With the implementation of standards-based instruction in K-12 schools and in teacher education, significant changes in teacher recertification have been occurring throughout NCREL's region. Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin already have implemented new procedures for the renewal of teaching certificates that will take place in the next two to four years. These programs all include an approved Professional Development Plan that may or may not include required credits, and some states require a professional portfolio with performance-based evidence of accomplishment in state teacher standards. Exhibit 2 shows the certification renewal requirements for the seven states in the NCREL region:

Exhibit 2. Certification Renewal Requirements in the NCREL Region

	Levels	Standards-Based	Types	Years Valid	Requirements	Renewal
IL[1]	Early Childhood Elementary Secondary	Yes	Initial	4	Completion of approved program	Nonrenewable
			Standard	5	4 years teaching experience, basic skills and subject area tests	Approved Professional Development Plan, 8 credits or equivalent CPU/CDPU
			Master	10	NBPTS Certification	Approved Professional Development Plan, 8 credits or equivalent CPU/CDPU
IN[2]	Elementary: Primary Elementary: Intermediate Middle School/Junior High High School	Yes	Initial	2	Completion of approved program	Nonrenewable
			Proficient	5	Performance-based portfolio	Professional Growth Plan and Professional Portfolio
			Accomplished	5	MBPTS Certification or PGP and Professional Portfolio	Professional Growth Plan and Professional Portfolio
IA	Endorsements in different areas	No	Provisional	2	Completion of approved program	Nonrenewable
			Educational	5	2 years teaching experience	6 credits
			Professional	5	5 years teaching experience, master's degree	6 credits
MI	Elementary Secondary	Yes	Provisional	6	Completion of approved program	1st Renewal 10 credits
			Professional	5	18 credits (secondary-3 in reading; elementary-6 in reading)	6 credits
MN	Elementary Middle Level Secondary	No	Professional	5	Completion of approved program	125 clock hours of professional development
OH[3]	Early Childhood	Yes	Provisional	2	Completion of approved program	Nonrenewable

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	Middle Childhood Adolescence to Young Adult		Professional	5	Performance-based assessments	1st Renewal--Professional Development Plan 2nd Renewal--Professional Development Plan and Master's Degree
WI[4]	PK-3 Elementary: 1-6 Elementary: 1-9 Middle: 5-9 Middle/Secondary:6-12 Secondary: 9-12	Yes	Initial	5	Completion of approved program	Nonrenewable
			Professional	5	Professional development plan, documentation portfolio	Professional development plan, documentation portfolio
			Master	10	NBPTS certification or master's degree, 5 years teaching, contribution to profession, pupil learning	Professional development plan, documentation portfolio

[1] Proposed certificate changes begin July 2003.
[2] Applies to all students entering higher education institutions after 6/30/02 and to practicing teachers renewing licenses issued after 1/1/2002.
[3] Rules change for Provisional License on 9/1/2002 and for Professional License on 9/1/2006.
[4] Changes take effect in 2004.

Illinois

Illinois certificate holders must complete a Certificate Renewal Plan that includes the following:

- Three personal goals for improvement, each containing a statement of the knowledge and skill(s) to be enhanced, reflecting relevant professional teaching or content-area standards.
- Proposed professional development activities or types of activities, including the goals and purposes that the proposed activities address.
- Projected timelines for completing the activities within the five- or ten-year period of certificate validity. (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE] & State Teacher Certification Board [STCB], 2000)

The Plan must be submitted to a local professional development committee (LPDC), which decides whether to approve it and, if so, monitors progress, verifies that activities have been completed, and recommends whether certificates should be renewed (ISBE & STCB, 2000).

Teachers must accumulate the equivalent of 120 continuing professional development units (CPDU) if they plan to teach for the entire period of their certificate. According to the *Certificate Renewal Manual* (ISBE & STCB, 2000), 100 percent of the requirement for continuing professional development may be met by one of the following:

- 8 semester hours of college coursework.
- 24 continuing education units (CEUs).
- 120 continuing professional development units (CPDUs).
- Any combination of college courses, CEUs, or CPDUs equivalent to 24 CEUs or 120 CPDUs.
- Completion of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process.

In Illinois, there are four ways to accumulate continuing professional development credit:

- Earn semester hours for completing coursework in an education-related program at an accredited college or university.
- Participate in workshops, seminars, conferences, and other events for which continuing education units (CEUs) are issued by providers approved to issue them.
- Participate in any of a wide range of activities for which continuing professional development units (CPDUs) are available.

- Accumulate any combination of these three forms of credit.

Illinois has developed four purposes for professional development. Each activity that a teacher chooses to participate in must address one of the following purposes:

- Purpose A: To advance the certificate holder's knowledge and skills in his or her area(s) of certification, endorsement, or teaching assignment in relationship to the relevant standards.

- Purpose B: To develop the certificate holder's knowledge and skills in one or more areas identified by the State Board of Education as "state priorities" (reading, mathematics, integrating technology into teaching and learning, standards and assessment, and special education).

- Purpose C: To address the knowledge, skills, and goals that are relevant to the certificate holder's local school improvement plan if the individual is employed in a school that is required to have such a plan.

- Purpose D: To expand the certificate holder's knowledge and skills in an additional teaching field or advance the individual toward acquisition of an additional teaching certificate, endorsement, or degree in the field of education. (ISBE & STCB, 2000)

Indiana

According to the Indiana Professional Standards Board (2000), teachers in Indiana will face a new process to renew their certificates beginning in January 2002. To receive a Proficient level of certificate, teachers must complete a Professional Growth Plan within five years of receiving an Initial Teaching License. This Plan must include a portfolio with evidence of performance in the Standards set out by the Indiana Professional Standards Board. Teachers must continue this process with each five-year renewal. Teachers may substitute certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the Professional Portfolio to receive an Accomplished level of certification.

Iowa

After Iowa educators have obtained their educational license, the renewal process occurs every five years. Teachers are required to take six credits, which include any combination of the following list:

- Credit(s) completed that may not lead to a degree but which add greater depth/breadth to present endorsement held.

- Credit(s) completed that lead toward the completion of a planned master's, specialist's, or doctoral degree program.

- Credit(s) completed that may not lead to a degree but which lead to completion of requirements for an endorsement not currently held.

- Credit(s) completed through Iowa staff development courses or activities approved through guidelines established by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. In other words, Area Education Agency (AEA) staff development or approved Local Education Agency (LEA) staff development courses. Credits taken must add greater depth/breadth to present endorsements held. (Iowa Department of Education, 2000)

After educators have converted their educational licenses to professional licenses, they need to complete four credits every five years, following the list above.

Michigan

The initial teaching certificate in Michigan is a provisional license. This license is valid for six years, during which time the holder is expected to continue professional development in a planned course of study. The first time the holder renews, he or she needs to complete ten hours. The second renewal requires 18 hours in a planned course of study.

After renewing a provisional license, the holder advances to a professional education certificate. To renew this certificate, a teacher must complete six semester hours at an approved teacher preparation institution or 18 State Board continuing education units (SB-CEU) or a combination of the two. (Three SB-CEUs are equivalent to one semester hour.)

Minnesota

According to Minnesota Rule 8710.0300, Subpart 3 (n.d.), teachers with a professional license must submit one of the following for license renewal:

A. Verification by a local continuing education committee that the applicant has met renewal requirements for the professional license during the five-year period immediately preceding the application.

B. Evidence that the applicant earned at least 12 quarter or 8 semester hours of credit, applicable to the licensure fields, during the five-year period immediately preceding the application.

C. If neither item A nor B is submitted, a one-year extension of the expired professional license may be granted based on evidence that the applicant has been offered a position contingent upon holding a valid license. This extension expires on June 30 of the school year for which the license is issued and is nonrenewable. In order to qualify for a professional license after the one-year extension, the applicant shall provide evidence that renewal requirements for the professional license have been met under item A.

Ohio

Ohio currently is making major changes to its teacher certification and renewal process by moving from a credit/professional development unit requirement to a Professional Development Plan with performance-based assessment. Currently, Ohio has two types of license:

- Four-year provisional
- Eight-year professional

Renewal of the four-year provisional license requires teachers to complete 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours of college coursework or 18 Ohio Department of Education-approved continuing education units (CEU). College credit can be combined with CEUs for renewal. According to the Ohio Department of Education (2000), the coursework can be reduced by 1 semester hour or 1 ½ quarter hours or 3 CEUs for each year of successful experience under any standard certificate since the issue date of the certificate to be renewed. Substitute teaching of at least 120 days in an academic year will also reduce the coursework requirement by 1 semester hour or 1½ quarter hours or 3 CEUs.

Renewal of the eight-year professional certificate requires teachers to complete 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours of college coursework or the completion of 36 Ohio Department of Education-approved CEUs since the issue date of the certificate to be renewed. According to the Ohio Department of Education (2000), college coursework must be at the graduate level if the certificate requires a master's degree. The coursework requirement may be reduced by 1 semester hour or 1½ quarter hours or 3 CEUs for each year of successful experience under any standard certificate since the issue date of the certificate to be renewed. Also, like the four-year provisional certificate, substitute teaching of at least 120 days in an academic year also will reduce the coursework requirement by 1 semester hour or 1½ quarter hours or 3 CEUs.

Beginning in September 2006, Ohio teachers will renew their licenses similarly to those in Indiana. After their first five years, they must develop a Professional Development Plan that includes performance-based assessments to renew their Professional License. For the second renewal, in addition to the plan and assessments, teachers must complete a master's degree.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin teacher certification also is moving away from the traditional credit-hour requirement for certificate renewal. Until July 2004, to renew a five-year license in Wisconsin, teachers must complete a professional development growth requirement of 6 semester credits, 180 clock hours, or a combination of both. Thirty clock hours are equal to one semester credit. All requirements must be completed during the initial five-year license. This process is waived for those teachers who complete the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification process.

Teachers renewing certificates after July 2004 will undergo a different process. These teachers must create a professional development plan that outlines goals in one or more of the standards set by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. This plan must include activities related to these goals and assessment procedures to measure progress toward these goals.

Appendix C

Action Research Development

The Action Plan Chart for Action Research Development (Young, 2000), delineated below, can be used to help with the effective monitoring process of an action research project. The primary focus of the action plan chart is to carefully analyze research questions and the summary of findings.

Exhibit 3. Action Plan Chart for Action Research Development

Core action research questions and findings	**Recommended school improvement or instructional action targeted to findings**	**Who is responsible for the action and monitoring and collecting data** **Leadership team = LT** **Teacher = T** **Principal = P** **Parents = PA** **Other = O**	**Who needs to be consulted or informed**	**Timeline**	**Resources**
1. Research Question Summary of Findings					
2. Research Question Summary of Findings					
3. Research Question Summary of Findings					

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